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THE EXPANSION OF A METALLURGICAL ENTERPRISE IN THE FAR EAST

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The industrialization of the Far East during the years of the Stalin Five-Year Plans has sharply altered the appearance of the territory. From the backward borderland, which served as an area of quick profits for merchants and Tsarist officials, the Far East has changed into a "powerful outpost of Soviet power in the East" (Molotov). Under the new Five-Year Plan, large-scale industrial construction, producing important metal requirements is developing in the Far East. The construction of new ship-building installations is planned, and the production of engines, machine tools, and other kinds of machinery is developing. Khabarovsk Krai, which takes in new areas of the fishing industry -- southern Sakhalin and the Kurile Islands -- will, at the end of the Five-Year Plan, yield approximately 50 percent of the Union's entire fish production. Compared with the prewar period, the catch of fish in Primorsky Krai is increasing twofold. The fish-canning industry is growing, increasing the demand for rolled tin.

The Far East, far removed from the established metallurgical districts of the country, has been working on imported metal until recently. The transport distance in prewar years reached a maximum of 9,000 kilometers. Transport costs for the delivery of metal to the Far East exceeded its cost price at the place of production.

The 15th Party Congress in 1939 adopted a resolution concerning the establishment in the Far East of a new metallurgical base with a complete metallurgical cycle to provide all machine-building requirements on the spot.

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The Far East first received steel and rolled products of its own production during the hard times of the Great Patriotic War. The military defense of the Far Eastern frontiers went hand in hand with their economic fortification. "Amurstal" in Komsomol'sk on the Amur, forerunner of active Far Eastern metallurgical enterprises, was put into operation during the war.

The Five-Year Plan sets forth the following goals: "To construct and put into operation in a metallurgical plant in the Far East a coke-chemical works and blast furnace, and also to expand the open hearth shop and rolling mill."

"Amurstal" is becoming a plant with a complete cycle of metallurgical production. The plant will produce pig iron, coke, steel, various kinds of rolled products, and also metalware. A tin-rolling mill will supply the fish-canning industry with tin plate.

The steel output will increase 4.5 times, and the rolled-products output five times by the end of the Five-Year Plan. This will fully provide the metal requirements of the national economy in the Far East. The coke-chemical industry will develop in connection with the coking of coal.

In various places, particularly in the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, there will appear many pits, mines, and quarries. New miners' settlements will occasion an influx of permanent settlers into the remote, forested corners of the territory. They will establish among themselves new agricultural centers. The number of workers at the Komsomol'sk plant will increase five times. The transport junction of Komsomol'sk is developing extensively.

The Far Eastern metallurgical center has been planned on the shore of the Sea of Japan, in the Ol'ga Bay district, to develop Ol'ga magnetite and the coking coal found in northern Suchan. Subsequently, in connection with new data on the coal and ore resources of the Bureya range, this district was designated as the center of concentration for the future metallurgical industry of the territory. At the present time, the metallurgical industry is being established in Komsomol'sk on the Amur, a large-scale shipbuilding and machine building center of the Far East.

Thus, the Far Eastern metallurgical industry centered, in Komsomol'sk on the Amur, is being formed, not at the sites of ore beds (as in the Urals) or coal deposits (as in the Donbass) but, somewhat like the northwestern metallurgical industry, in an area of developing machine building, where the metal consumption is growing from year to year.

Scrap metal will occupy an important place in the raw-material balance of Far Eastern metallurgy (again like the northwest) and the smelting of steel and rolled iron will be noticeably more important than the smelting of pig iron.

The location of Komsomol'sk at the junction of the railroad with the mighty Amur waterway system, and also at the outlets to the sea routes, favors the collection there of scrap metal from many centers of the Far East and the Baykal area. Komsomol'sk also has its own scrap -- the current waste of the machine-building and metallurgical industries.

The basis of the metallurgical industry in Komsomol'sk permits the metallurgical industry of the Far East to satisfy better the requirements

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and demands of the territory's machine-building plants.

Coking coal, iron ore, manganese, and other alloying admixtures (tungsten, molybdenum), and the nonmetallic raw materials necessary to the plant occur in the Bureya range area.

The Bureya coal basin will be the coal base of metallurgy in the Far East. It is situated in two separate depressions extending northeast on the lower western spurs of the Bureya range on the upper course of the mountain and forest river, Bureya (left tributary of the Amur). The basin lies 400 kilometers from the Bureya station.

The geological reserves of coal in the Bureya basin, the boundaries of which have not yet been fixed in certain sections, amount to 26 billion tons according to the rating of the 17th International Geological Conference in Moscow (1937). A considerable portion of the coal is choked with dead rock and requires dressing. With an insignificant sulfur content, the coal is characterized as having an increased ash content (as much as 30-35 percent), the result of interstratification of the coal mass with combustible shales. Despite these faults, the metallurgical coke received from the Bureya basin is of satisfactory quality. The lower levels of the coal-bearing stratum, more impregnated with coal, yield even better coking coal.

Gas coals of the Urgal deposit in the Bureya depression (along the Urgal River, left tributary of the Bureya) are sorted out according to the concentration of the occurrences and their ability to clinker and yield good coke. The first coal was mined on the Urgal in 1940. By 1950, eight shafts will have been put into operation. The Urgal will yield 1,250 thousand tons of coking coal annually. The mining town of Sredny Urgal, future center of the Bureya coal industry, is growing.

Much coking coal is also found in other areas of the Far East (northern Sakhalin, northern Suchan).

On the eastern spurs of the Bureya range, in the lowland of the Bira and Bidzhan rivers (on the territory of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast) are found the Bureya or so-called Malyy Khingan, deposits of red iron ore. They extend in a strip approximately 150 kilometers from the Amur northward toward the Amur railroad line, in the area of the Londok-Birakan-Kimkan stations on the sector approximately 400 kilometers southwest from Komsomol'sk. With the exception of ores from several more northerly deposits, the Malyy Khingan ores require concentration. The chief fault of the ores of this area, which contain insignificant quantities of phosphorus and sulfur, is the high acidity owing to the occurrence of quartz and microcrystalline silica. For this reason, their smelting requires a great amount of coke and flux.

Situated in a wild, forested locality, but lying between the railroad trunk line and the Amur, the Malyy Khingan deposits are characterized as having a favorable location from the viewpoints of transportation and geography. Some of the deposits are only 30 kilometers from the railroad. In the Birakan-Kimkan area, deposits were discovered along the railroad line. The Kimkan deposits have extremely large reserves of rich iron ore and are becoming the most important iron ore base of the Far Eastern metallurgical industry.

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Besides the Malyy Khingan ore, the ores of the Nikolayevsk and probably the Selendzha deposits will also be processed at the plant.

The brown iron ores of the Nikolayevsk deposit are found downstream on the Amur (on the left bank, 0.5 kilometers from the bank, on the edge of the municipal grounds of Nikolayevsk on the Amur). The Nikolayevsk ore is characterized as a shallow bed, easy to smelt and, in contrast to the Kirkan ore, does not require dressing. It contains an average of 40 percent iron and is already being processed by "Amurstal" in open-hearth production.

The ore of the Selendzha deposit (along the Selendzha River) is distinguished by its exceptionally high quality (60-62 percent iron). However, this deposit is significantly lower in reserves than those mentioned above.

In 1933, in connection with the investigation of a route for the Volochayevka-Komsomol'sk branch rail line, manganese was discovered in the foothills of the Vandan Range in the populated but partially swampy locality bordering the Jewish Autonomous Oblast on the north. The Vandan manganese deposits, gravitating toward the railroad (on the sector of the Dzholymkin Station-Vandan siding) contain acidic ores which yield concentrates useful for the smelting of ferromanganese. Manganese is also found on the southeastern slope of the Bureya range (in the territory of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast, in the Stolbovaya settlement area).

Deposits of tungsten (upstream on the Bureya and Selendzha rivers) and molybdenum were also found in the Bureya system. All this provides the opportunity for the smelting of high-grade steels.

Large deposits of high-grade nonmetallic raw materials have been uncovered in the immediate vicinity of the Malyy Khingan deposit and are already being used by "Amurstal". These include the Londoko deposit of flinty limestone, and the Birakan deposits of dolomite and magnesite in the territory of the Jewish Autonomous Oblast. Reserves of high-quality fire clays and molting sand were found in many places.

The growth of "Amurstal" and its conversion into a plant with a complete metallurgical cycle is helping to solve the problem of the decentralization of the ferrous metallurgical industry and the elimination of long hauls of metal. Likewise, it is aiding the complex development of the national economy in the Far East and, along with this, is economically strengthening this vast territory which is exceedingly important in economic, political, and strategic respects.

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